MONTEREY NEWS

March 2008
VOLUME XXXVIII · Number 3

The Town

The News still does not have a town reporter, so once more the editor compiled this report from Select Board meeting minutes recorded by Inter-Departmental Secretary Melissa Noe and approved by the Select Board. (Section headings and order are the editor's.) The meetings of January 28 and February 4 are covered in this report. There were no meetings on February 18 and 25, and the minutes of the February 11th meeting were not made public in time for this issue. Anyone interested in being town reporter should contact the editor.

On the Roads

At the January 28th Select Board meeting Director of Operations Maynard Forbes asked where the Town stood regarding the new salt shed and when it could be put out to bid. Select Board Chair Jon Sylbert said that he would talk to Representative Smitty Pignatelli and Senator Ben Downing about the possibility of state assistance for construction of the shed.

A resident questioned the portion of Mt. Hunger Road past Nancy Kalodner's home and whether the road was going to be widened to accommodate all of the new building projects. Forbes stated that he is very concerned about the road's current specifications and future traffic but that a project of this magnitude would have to go before the Town at a Town meeting.

Joe Baker

Hunger Brook in February, downstream.

Richard Tryon informed the Select Board that portions of New Marlborough Road are in need of repair. He stated that the surface is starting to crackle and that some oil and stone would take care of it. Select Board member Wayne Burkhart said that the Board had discussed it with the Director of Operations recently and cost-wise oil and stone might not be the best option. Tryon asked the Board to make a site visit to view it themselves. Director of Operations Forbes said at the next meeting that to do what Tryon is requesting would cost approximately $30,000 and would only temporarily fix the problem.

Building Issues

Building Inspector Donald Torrico asked the Select Board to appoint an alternate (deputy) plumbing and gas inspector, and both he and Plumbing and Gas Inspector R. Krupski recommended Glenn Wilcox of Lee. The Board approved Wilcox's appointment and a letter of appointment was mailed to him.

The current process for how the Plumbing Inspector and Electrical Inspector receive permit applications and fees was discussed. The Board agreed with Torrico that the forms and fees should be sent and managed through the Town Offices instead of being sent to the Inspector's homes.

Torrico told the Board that if he was going to be responsible for issuing the permits for the new trenching regulations that go into effect in January 2009 he should receive additional compensation for the added duties. The Town will be able to charge a fee for this permit. Torrico also asked what the Board had decided on for a cost of living increase. The Board said it would have to be decided at an executive level on an individual basis.

Torrico asked about the Town Bylaws and wanted to know if someone was going to review the Town Meeting Warrant and votes. Wayne Burkhart said that he had spoken with the Town Clerk, who will speak with the Planning Board since she recalls that it never went before the Town at Town Meeting. The Town Clerk's town report, which included the votes made at Town Meeting, was provided to the Board and to Torrico.

Torrico reported that he has received several calls about the Seven Stones property. The new owner's lawyer feels that the use as a camp has been abandoned and they are going to apply for a special permit to run the camp again in the future. A question has also arisen about the road frontage noted on the March 2007 ANR map/site plan signed by the Planning Board, which shows the property's road frontage in Great Barrington. Since the buildings are located in Monterey, questions arose about how any building permits should be handled according to the Town Bylaws. An email was sent to the Planning Board requesting more information.

Police Blotter

- False alarm at Monterey Library; building was secure.
- Domestic call on Main Road.
- An unregistered and uninsured vehicle parked at Lake Buel boat launch was towed. The owner was cited for operating an unregistered vehicle.

Financial Matters

Town Accountant, Barbara Gauthier advised the Select Board that the Board and the Finance Committee need to meet to declare a winter emergency to give the Highway Department permission to continue spending even though they have reached their budgeted amount. Gauthier also noted that the bill received from the Planning Board regarding the Master Plan should have been placed on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Pat Mielke, Town Treasurer, discussed the Senior Property Tax Work-Off Program (a tax abatement) with the Select

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Board and provided forms created by New Marlborough when they instituted the program and modified to fit Monterey's needs. An informational session about the program was scheduled for February 9.

The Board informed Mielke that Massamont Insurance Company had asked if the Board was going to put the Town's insurance for the upcoming FY out to a competitive bid. Mielke said she didn't have a problem as long as they attempted to get at least three bids. It is the Board's understanding that Massamont does not offer all of the same insurance services we currently get through MIIA and if the insurance were to go out to bid it would need to be for all of the services we currently get and need. The Board is sending a letter to Massamont asking what information they need from the Town to make a bid and if they offer health insurance. The Board confirmed that if the competitors ask for current prices being paid, this information should not be provided.

The School District Issue

Richard Tryon asked for an update on the school situation. Jon Sylbert stated that a five-town mediation had been scheduled, but when New Marlborough formally announced to sue Sheffield, Sheffield pulled out of the mediation. Tryon said he'd like to see the district go back to electing School Committee members. Sylbert said that all five towns would need to agree to that.

The Select Board, the Finance Committee, and Deborah Mielke, Monterey's representative on the School Committee, reviewed and sent a letter to Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District, regarding the recent proposal to reduce the number of classes, resulting in larger class sizes. Copies are being sent to the Select Boards of other towns in the district and to all of the School Committee members.

Joe Baker

Hunger Brook in February, upstream.

This and That

Fire Chief Raymond Tryon reviewed his FY09 budget requests and three special articles (16 sets of turnout gear, 6 SCVAs, and a hose replacement) with the Select Board before submitting them to the Finance Committee. Tryon also wants to review the Select Board's role specified in the Incident Command System flowchart, which is to operate the EOC (Emergency Operating Center) along with the Emergency Manager. The Board suggested having a meeting to review emergency management and command structure sometime before summer.

Elizabeth Goodman, Pastor of the Monterey United Church, came in to thank the Select Board for all of their hard work and to ask what they felt were the five most pressing issues facing Monterey over the next five to ten years. The Board discussed several issues with her, including but not limited to affordable housing.

Joe Baker of the Wilson McLaughlin House Committee asked the Select Board about the status of the Town's petition to

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Probate Court about the stipulations of Edith Wilson's bequest. The Board gave Baker permission to contact Town Counsel directly about this matter.

The Select Board was advised of Town Counsel's recommendation of a surveyor to use to survey the Town Beach and surround property. At the February 11th meeting John Campetti of Foresight Land Services met with the Board and was asked what it would take to definitively determine the owners of several plots of land surrounding the Town Beach. Mr. Campetti brought maps from when the dam was reconstructed and the road was relocated (Foresight was the engineer/surveyor for the project). The Board pointed out the areas they were concerned about and asked what the cost would be to officially open up the survey and if there would be a definitive answer to their questions that would resolve the issue.

Melissa Noe informed the Board that Michael Storch declined the appointment to the Employee Compensation Committee to replace Janet Cathcart (resident representative). The Board also needs to fill the vacancy created on the committee by Dan Moriarity (Finance Committee representative).

Brian Puntin and Alan Salamon of the Planning Board came in to formally request that the Board appoint their recommendations to fill the vacancies on the Planning Board. The Select Board said they had been asked by a member of the Democratic Committee why the Planning Board would appoint persons to fill the vacancies now when in a few weeks they will have to be nominated and run for office. The Town Clerk and/or Town Counsel need to be asked if a person appointed now would appear as an incumbent on the ballot in the upcoming election. The Board looked up the relevant state law, which says that all members need to be present to vote on the appointments. The Planning Board was to try to arrange to have all Planning Board members present at the next Select Board meeting.

Peter Murkett came in to follow up with the Select Board about his position regarding the recent letter from the Select Board in the *Monterey News* dropping the investigation of the Town Clerk's office.

The Board set a submission deadline of March 31 at 11:30 a.m. for Citizen Petitions and Special Articles for the Town Meeting Warrant.

— Will Marsh
(from Select Board minutes)

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Brush Burning Ends April 30

Each year, the state allows some Massachusetts towns, including Monterey, to conduct open burning. It is important to remember that when burning, you are subject to certain requirements and responsibilities issued and enforced by the State Fire Marshals Office, DEP, and your local Fire Department. These guidelines include the following:

- Permits can be obtained from January 15 to April 30.
- You must obtain a permit for open burning from the Monterey Fire Department by calling **528-1734.**
- Residents must call on the day they will be burning; no permits are issued ahead of time. The permit is good for one day only.
- Burning hours start at 10 a.m. and all fires must be out by 4 p.m.
- Burning materials will be confined to brush only. **All other materials are prohibited.**
- Burning piles will be kept small and controllable.
- No burning within 75 ft. of a building.
- Have a method of extinguishment and tools available.
- Permits are issued weather permitting. Burning is not allowed every day.
- Burning season will not be extended.

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Winter Soldier Event in Monterey March 14–15

In the winter of 1776 Thomas Paine saw the soldiers leaving Valley Forge, heading home. He wrote in his first *Crisis Paper,* "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

Nearly 200 years later in the winter of 1971, 130 Vietnam veterans came together in Detroit in the Winter Soldier Investigation. For three days they testified about war crimes they had committed and seen committed, because they felt these crimes were destroying our national unity. They told their horrible stories because they did not want the things that had happened to them to happen to anyone else.

Now, 37 years later, Iraq Veterans Against War have organized a Winter Soldier Investigation pertaining to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. They will testify near Washington, DC, for four days, stating what they have seen and done, things most people can't know about unless they have been combat soldiers in the last five years.

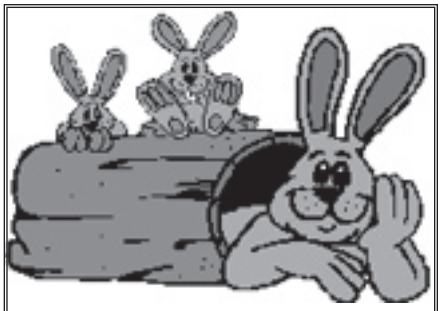
These testimonies take great courage to give. They bring up memories of horror and trauma, and the veterans giving them risk their relationships with their families, neighbors, and fellow soldiers. They are the Winter Soldiers of these times and anyone wanting to hear their voices can do so.

Check the web at ivaw.org/winter-soldier or just google Winter Soldier. You will find also that a documentary film was made in 1972 by a collective of filmmakers. They filmed the testimony of the 1971 Winter Soldiers and later a full transcript was entered into the Congressional Record. This had immediate effects upon many members of Congress at the time and was most significant in ending the war.

Those wishing to stand with the current Winter Soldiers are invited walk to town on Saturday, March 15, and gather on the steps of the Monterey Meetinghouse (United Church of Christ) between 10:00 a.m. and noon. This will be a respectful and prayerful gathering.

Everyone is invited to come to the Meetinghouse basement (Social Room) on Friday, March 14, at 5:00 p.m. for sign-making. Bring sign-making materials and a simple supper in a bag and stay for the evening if you would like to see footage of the 2008 Winter Soldier Investigation, which will be shown at 7:00. If it is anything like the 1972 Winter Soldier Investigation, it will be material that is not appropriate for small children. War: appropriate for whom?

The 1972 film is available through Netflix. One of the filmmakers later said: "You see this film and feel the difference between you and the soldiers fall away." It is no small thing, to identify with young men who are telling of war crimes they have committed.



Easter Egg Hunt

Sunday, March 23,
At
2:00 pm
On
Library Lawn

Sponsored by
Monterey Coffee Club

Rabies Clinic March 8

A rabies clinic for dogs and cats will be held on Saturday, March 8, 2008, from 1:00 to 2:30 .p.m, at the Monterey Firehouse. The cost is $10 per shot.

Dog licenses will be available also.

The clinic is not just for Monterey residents; all are welcome.

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Monterey Broadband Committee Update

There has been a lot going on with broadband over the last month, but first, I'd like to address some questions I'm frequently asked about broadband Internet access in Monterey.

Why can't we just get DSL for the rest of Monterey?

About 30% of Monterey has access to DSL, so it would seem that the easiest solution would be for Verizon to expand its DSL coverage here. The Broadband Committee has tried several approaches with Verizon, as have other towns in Massachusetts, with limited or no broadband service. Verizon has told us they will not be expanding their DSL offerings at this time. It's important to understand that DSL is not considered adequate or efficient for future increased broadband requirements, which will need to accommodate Internet, TV, radio, and voice data.

What is the recommended broadband technology of the future?

The unanimous recommendation we are getting from industry experts is that fiber-optic cable is the broadband technology that will accommodate the increasing bandwidth requirements of the future. According to local technology expert Arthur Dellea, "*Fiber is the future. Everything will come into your house through a fiber cable. People will have only three wires running to their homes: AC power (hot and common wires) and one fat fiber-optic cable carrying everything including TV, internet, radio, phone, etc. This is actually what they have already done in several foreign countries, and where the US is really lagging behind.*" This is also the basis of the technology the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and Governor Patrick's office are advocating for statewide rollout under Patrick's $25 million broadband bill. Urban areas in the US already have this technology, and in order for our students, legislators, businesses, and residents to be on a level playing field, Monterey will need fiber.

What are the details, status and timing for Governor Patrick's broadband initiative?

The Governor's $25 million broadband bill would leverage targeted investments in broadband infrastructure to attract major cable and Internet providers to partner with the state. The investments would be focused in areas with limited or no broadband service. Currently 32 towns in Massachusetts have no broadband – and all but one are located in western Massachusetts.

The state Telecommunications and Cable Commissioner has already had discussions with several broadband infrastructure providers, including Verizon, Comcast, Richmond Networx, and other regional and national providers, so that they can be ready to go as soon as the bill is passed. They are planning an aggressive schedule, with the goal of having unserved households hooked up for broadband by 2010, according to Commissioner Gillett.

On February 14th, a public hearing was held at the Statehouse in Boston to hear testimony on the bill. Monica Webb and Karen Schreefter from the Monterey Broadband Committee attended, along with a busload of South Berkshire citizens. Four hours of testimony were presented at the standing-room-only hearing, including compelling words from our local legislators, state officials, Berkshire Connect, the South Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, Berkshire residents and students, and Governor Patrick himself. "*Broadband is a necessary service that stands to improve opportunities in education, civic engagement, and economic growth*," Patrick told legislators.

There is every indication that the bill will be passed in this legislative session,

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as Chairman Mark Montigny mentioned repeatedly that he believed this bill was exactly how state money should be spent. We will continue to monitor the legislative process regarding this bill and keep you informed as details. Additional information is also available at www.bconnect.org.

What can we do in the meantime?

The Broadband Committee has determined two possible interim options that would offer faster and better Internet service than dial-up until the state-funded solution is available in Monterey. More information on these technologies will be presented to the Select Board. Please note you can also go to the Monterey General Store or the Monterey Public Library for free wireless DSL internet access. After hours, access is available in the library driveway.

HughesNet's New Spaceway 3 Satellite: This is an easy option for both individuals and the town, requiring installation of a small satellite dish on or near your home. Please note this is a new satellite technology from Hughes available as of March 26, which offers improved service from their current satellite offering, at the same pricing. It consists of a new satellite with much improved bandwidth and ability to service more home sites more reliably. If you already have service with Hughes, the company is predicting speed improvements on existing satellites, as they transition people onto the new, larger capacity satellite. You can also request to be moved to the new Spaceway 3 satellite, but you will need a new transmitter for your system. See pricing packages below, and for more information, refer to: http://www.getdsltoo.com/spaceway3.asp or www.hughesnet.com.

WiSpring Wireless Internet Service Provider: WiSpring is a local provider of wireless Internet services that transmits radio signals from towers to receiving antennas in homes. It is a similar technology to cell phones and towers, transmitted at a lower frequency. WiSpring offers various packages for home and business with speeds from dial-up to DSL quality (see pricing details below), and has a lower latency (time for data to reach destination) than satellite. Since Monterey is a town with hills, valleys, ridges, and trees, WiSpring estimates they would need to erect at least 6 towers to get coverage to the majority of Monterey. This will take time, as it would require town approvals, town zoning bylaw changes, potentially Scenic Mountain Act override in some locations, health risk assessment to nearby residents and wildlife, determination of appropriate sites and land owner negotiation, and erection of 6 towers 15 feet above the treeline (usually 85–125feet tall). For more information on WiSpring's services, go to www.wispring.com.

If you have specific questions for the broadband committee, please forward them to broadbandcommittee@verizon.net.

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Upload Speed (up to)	128 Kbps	200 Kbps	200 Kbps	300 Kbps	500 Kbps
Installation (Complete New System)	$299 after $100 rebate (24-month payment option available)				

Fair-access policy in effect

WiSpring Packages & Pricing (also custom solutions available)

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Download Speed (up to)	1.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps	1.5 Mbps	1.0 Mbps	1.5 Mbps
Upload Speed (up to)	384 Kbps	1.0 Mbps	1.0 Mbps	512 Kbps	1.0 Mbps
Installation	One-year commitment: $499 Two-year commitment: $399				

No fair-access policy needed as of yet

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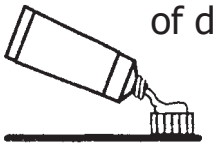

528-6520

Route 23 Monterey

Proposed School Agreement Amendment Would Make School Committee Elective

A petition is currently being circulated in support of a proposed amendment to the Southern Berkshire Regional School District Agreement that would return school committee member selection to elective from appointive. The questions and answers below were prepared by citizens of the district favoring the amendment.

Why do we want to change from appointive to elective?

School districts are meant to be elective to keep them in the hands of the voters and out of other town political processes and controls. For example, only one other district in the Commonwealth is appointive. In this system, each member on the school committee is "voted" in by only three votes – the Select Board.

Why are we on an appointive system now?

The School Committee and Select Boards of the five towns could not agree on an election process that met the one-person-one-vote requirements.

Will this approach meet "one-person-one-vote tests"?

Yes.

How can we reach agreement on this approach now?

This change is being brought about by district residents outside of the normal political process. Only the registered voters of the five towns in the district will make this decision.

What will be the committee's composition?

Same as now. Ten members as follows: one from Alford, two from Egremont, one from Monterey, two from New Marlborough and four from Sheffield.

What will be qualifications of candidates?

A candidate for committee membership must be a resident of the town the candidate seeks to represent.

SBRSD School Committee Proposal

	Current System	Proposed
School Member Responsibility per Mass Law & Dept. of Education	Education of children living in all SBRSD towns	Education of children living in all SBRSD towns
School Committee Members Selection Method	Appointed by Board of Selectmen	Chosen by all Voters in District
How many people in each town have the opportunity to vote for each town school committee member?	3 Selectmen	All Voters
School Members from each town	Alford 1, Egremont 2, Monterey 1, New Marlborough 2, Sheffield 4	Same
Residency Requirements	No	Yes
Length of Term	2 years	4 years
When Elected	Never	Biennial State Elections in Nov; 2008, 2010, etc.
Recall	No – appointed	Yes
One Person One Vote Compliant	Yes	Yes
Approved by Dept. of Education	Yes	Yes

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What kind of election?

Members would be elected in a district-wide election held at the biennial state elections starting in 2008, if possible. The elections will allow each voter in the SBRSD to vote for every position to be filled in every town in the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

How long will the term be?

An elected member's term of office shall be four years. Current appointed members will finish terms.

What about vacancies?

If any vacancy occurs among members, a successor member shall be appointed until the next biennial election.

How do we make this change?

By signing the available petition in the town in which you are a registered voter. Validated signatures of 200 registered voters across the five towns are presented to the secretary of the SBRSD School Committee and the secretary sends them to the five town elect Boards, who must put the proposed amendment on the Warrant for the next Town Meeting.

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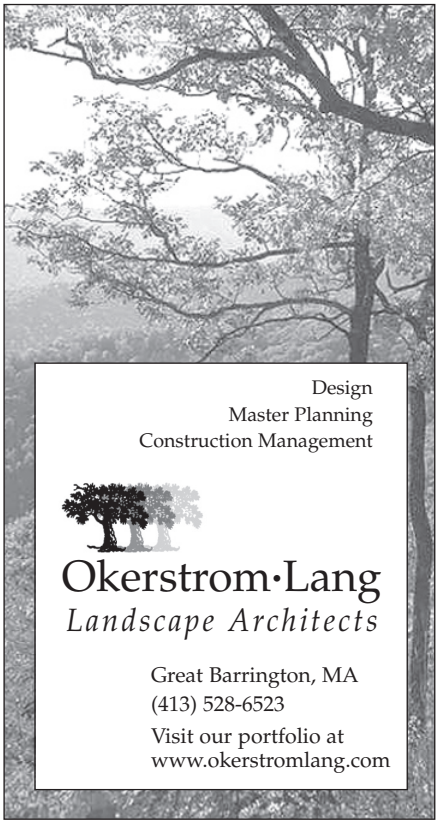

Cultural Council Events

Basketry Workshop

March 15, 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse lower level ($25.00, Adults, preregister)

There is still time to register for basket maker Wendy Jensen's hands-on workshop for adults. Participants, from beginners to experienced basket makers, will create a colonial carrying basket they can take home at the end of the day. The $25 entry fee covers all materials. Jensen, an award-winning basket maker who lives in Great Barrington, has taught basketry for fifteen years and has exhibited her work in galleries and at shows throughout the region. Pre-registration is required, and space is limited. Lunch is not provided, but participants can either bring their own or order from the General Store. Kenn Basler will provide order forms from the Store the morning of the workshop and have lunches ready by noon. For information and registration, call Joe Baker at 528-9385.

New Art of Pastel Painting

April 18, 6:00–8:00 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse lower level (Free, Adults, preregister)

The last time award-winning artist Gregory Maichack led a workshop in Monterey it was a great success, so we invited him back. But space is limited, so don't wait too long to pre-register. In this pastel painting workshop (nominated twice for a Massachusetts Gold Star Program Award), participants will receive an engaging hands-on experience of pastel painting with beginning to advanced techniques, and also explore the concepts underlying Leonardo da Vinci's paintings. Maichack will individually demonstrate the essentials of painting with pastels and will display his original pastel artwork to illustrate the talk. His demo of expressive pastel painting shows how to achieve luminous color and volume, how to structure an engaging composition, and tips on creating impact. All who attend will receive help tailored to their projects, whether landscapes, still life, or portraiture. Participants will freely experiment with hundreds of artists' professional grade hard and soft pastels and professional pastel paper. All one needs to bring is a photo/image of a landscape to work from. For questions and registration, call Joe Baker, 528-9385. This workshop is for adults, seniors, and older teens (teens please inquire about age limits when registering).

Maichack is a portraitist and painter working primarily in pastels and a faculty member of the Quadrangle Museum Studio School at the Museum of Fine Arts in Springfield. He also teaches at Greenfield and Holyoke Community Colleges in the adult continuing education departments.

Birding with Rich Guthrie

May 23 and 24, Monterey Meetinghouse (free)

You've heard him on WAMC's *Vox Pop,* and now you can meet him in person. Birding expert, photographer, and radio personality Rich Guthrie will speak about birds in our region on Friday night, followed by a bird-watching outing early Saturday morning. Mark your calendar and watch for details!

More to Come …

The Cultural Council is working on several new events for the spring and summer including a printmaking workshop with Adrienne Lederman, a resident of Otis and New York, and a Monterey nature walk in June with our own Bonner McAllester. Some music and theater projects are in the works as well. Watch upcoming issues of the *Monterey News* for details.

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Monterey Library Notes

The Monterey Library's first poetry slam will be held on May 10 at 7 p.m. Anyone wishing to recite their own work for up to three minutes should plan to be at the library between 6:30 and 6:45 to register. Only twenty slots will be available, so don't be late. We will be looking for a good audience as well—and if you are lucky enough to be chosen you could be one of the judges! Start planning your three minutes of poetry and compete to win prizes and perhaps a slot in the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System's final round, which will be a few weeks after our slam!

The youth book discussion group has been meeting all year, thanks in part to a grant from the Monterey Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. Those who have read five of the books from the Massachusetts Children's Book Award list will be voting on their favorite book on March 3rd. March 3rd will also be a special night, with all three age groups meeting to listen to and ask questions of Steve Snyder, a friend of the author of *Listening for Lions*. Steve has spent many years in Africa and will be talking of life in Africa. The groups will have two more meetings after that and hope to have their own poetry reading after a pizza party at the Monterey General Store for the last meeting.

CWMARS

The Monterey Library has changed automation systems as of February 9 and now is a full member of Central/Western Massachusetts Automated Resource Sharing system, which covers from east of Worcester all the way to the Berkshires. Come in and get a CWMARS card if you don't have one. If you already have one, enjoy the fact that you can now have holds delivered to Monterey. Go on the web to wmars.cwmars.org/ and click on the Western Massachusetts catalog. If you find a book, an audiobook, or a DVD or video that you would like to see, click on "request this item" and have it delivered to Monterey. We will call you to tell you when it comes in. You will need a valid CWMARS card—available at our library as well as the ones in Great Barrington, New Marlborough, Sheffield, Lee, Stockbridge, Lenox, and Pittsfield, among the over 100 libraries that are already members. This new automation system has many other features, among them access to our catalog as well as the whole region's catalog 24/7; the ability to access your own card account 24/7 to keep track of what you have checked out and to renew items; the ability to use your library card from Monterey at any of the previously mentioned libraries; and even access to databases. If you aren't able to browse our library during our hours, you can browse not only our library but the rest of Western Massachusetts whenever you want, and this "card catalog" has much more than the author and the title.

We as library staff are just learning this system, so we appreciate your patience. In fact, some of you may be able to help us with your experience as members of CWMARS at other libraries. This system allows us to increase our collection from nine thousand items to nine million! Our challenge is to teach our patrons how to utilize the system to serve their needs. Much of this system is intuitive, but we are more than glad to demonstrate what we know if the library isn't too busy at any given time. Thanks to a very reliable volunteer, Grace Mendel, who comes in Monday nights I will have time on those evenings to help you explore different things you can do with your new CWMARS card, except for the nights when the Trustees meet, usually the second Monday of the month. If there's demand, and when I have become better acquainted with the system, I will hold group trainings—though if you can come in individually you'll be able to explore the software directly. We didn't join CWMARS because of problems with our old and reliable software—we joined because this system is of great benefit to our patrons, so please feel free to use the system to its fullest possibility! It was very exciting this past week when the first load of books ordered by our patrons arrived and we were able to call to tell them their book had arrived.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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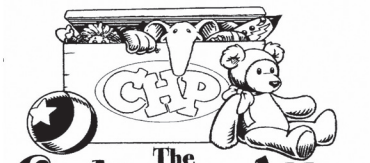

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Bidwell House Hosts Peter Amidon, Sacred Harp Singers

You've heard it on the soundtrack to Cold Mountain, and now Shape Note Singing is coming to Monterey on Saturday, May 31, at Monterey United Church of Christ with a workshop at 2:00 p.m. and a presentation at 4:00 p.m. The featured lead singer is Peter Amidon, who grew up in Monterey and with his wife, Mary Alice, has dedicated more than twenty years to performing and teaching traditional song, dance, and story-telling.

The Amidons have been on two US and three European tours with Northern Harmony choruses and are featured singers on American Shape Note Music "Rivers of Delight." They are in great demand; a list of their upcoming performances and more biographical information can be viewed at their web site, amidonmusic.com. The Monterey event is sponsored by the Bidwell House Museum as its opening attraction of the 2008 season and has been partially funded by the Monterey Cultural Council.

Shape note singing was formulated in colonial New England in the eighteenth century. A uniquely American tradition, it was kept alive in the rural southern states and has recently returned with great popularity not only to New England but nationwide. Often called Sacred Harp singing, the term derives B. F. White and E. J. King's *The Sacred Harp,* published in 1844.

The Bidwell House Museum's director, Martha Dailey, will be writing a series of informational articles for Monterey residents in preparation for the unique event. "The best way to learn more about Sacred Harp singing is to experience it," she says. Singers sit in a "hollow square"; it is four-part, unaccompanied, full voice singing. "What I like most about it is that it is so inclusive and democratic. Singing 'schools' were set up all over New England and itinerant teachers taught with tunebooks that featured noteheads in four shapes," said Dailey. Beginners and newcomers are especially attracted to the community sing-a-long, which has no religious affiliation.

Thousands of teachers, parents, and young people have shared the Amidons' music through their albums of songs for all ages. When Pete Seeger attended a Sacred Harp Sing led by Peter Amidon recently, he said, "I've known shape note singing for 55 years ... but never was part of such a large gang so expertly led." The Amidons will be joined by Matt and Rosie Wojcik and other lead singers at an old and new American shape note sing in a participatory workshop at 2:00 p.m., followed by refreshments and a presentation at 4:00 p.m. Guests may sit anywhere in the church space; a ten-dollar fee will include one or both of the performances.

— Martha Dailey

Democratic Caucus March 8

All registered Democrats in Monterey are welcome to attend a caucus on Saturday, March 8, at 11 a.m. in the Meetinghouse basement. The purpose of this caucus will be to select and endorse candidates to run for town offices. A snow date of Friday, March 14, at 7 p.m. has been set for the same location.

Candidates will be chosen for Board of Appeals, Board of Assessors, Cemetery Committee, Constable, Board of Health, Finance Committee, Library Trustees (2 positions), Moderator, Park Commission (2 positions), Planning Board (3 positions), Select Board, and Tree Warden.

We are fortunate to have many incumbents who are willing to run for another term. However, particular attention needs to be paid to the Board of Assessors, the Finance Committee, and the Planning Board, where resignations have occurred or incumbents are not seeking to run again.

Please contact me at 528-5796 or malazz@verizon.net if you have any interest in serving your town.

— Muriel Lazzarini

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Free Workshops on Healthy Lawns and Gardens

Four free workshops on how to cultivate healthy lawns and gardens will be offered this spring by the Center for Ecological Technology (CET). During the workshops, the seasoned and beginner gardener alike will be introduced to simple preventive measures that help create beautiful, diverse landscapes that will thrive without the excessive use of harmful chemicals.

Dates and locations for the workshops are as follows:

• Saturday, March 15, 10 a.m., Ward's Nursery, Great Barrington

To register, call Ward's at 413-528-0166, or register online at www.wards-nursery.com.

• Saturday, April 5, 10 a.m., Holiday Farm, Dalton

To pre-register, call CET at 413-445-4556, ext. 17.

• Saturday, April 26, 10 a.m., Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation

To pre-register, call CET at 413-445-4556, ext. 17.

• Saturday, May 3, Lenox Green Living Fair, Lenox High School

To pre-register, call CET at 413-445-4556, ext. 17.

These workshops provide an opportunity to learn an approach to garden and lawn care called Integrated Pest Management, which focuses on ways to promote plant health that will make lawns and gardens less susceptible to drought, weeds and pests.

Landscape designer Sarah Shepard will be the featured speaker at the workshops. She has operated Sarah Shepard Designs since 1990, specializing in environmentally sound residential landscape designs in the Berkshires and southern Vermont. She is a member of the Ecological Landscaping Association and has a degree in landscape architecture.

For more information, visit www.cetonline.org, contact Jamie Cahillane at jamiec@cetonline.org, or call 413-445-4556, ext 14.

This project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development Administration.

Dinah Mielke on Dean's List

Endicott College has announced that Dinah Mielke of Monterey has been named to the Dean's List. A student must achieve a grade point average of 5.5 or higher in order to receive the Dean's List distinction. In informing Dinah of this honor, Laura Rossi-Le, Vice President, Dean of the Undergraduate College, stated, "The Dean's List acknowledges individual students who have made significant contributions to the College community through superior academic performance."

Dinah was also recently named an AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of achieving scores of 3 or higher on three AP exams, for which she also received college credit.

Dinah is a 2007 graduate of Mount Everett Regional High School, She is in her second semester at Endicott majoring in psychology with a concentration in criminal justice. She also has a minor in Spanish.

Green Living at the Drive-up

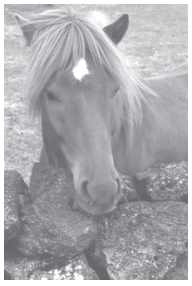
I know people who have hybrid cars. They tell me what a fine feeling it is to come to a stop at an intersection and have the engine go silent. They know that for a few seconds or minutes they are no longer contributing to air pollution, climate crisis, and the end to life on Earth as we know it. I have envied the hybrid drivers these happy moments in their cars.

Recently a light bulb (low-watt compact fluorescent) went off in my head. I discovered I have the power to shut off the engine in my car! Yes, it is a little key, in the ignition. A quick twist to the left and I am golden, right up there with the hybrid folks. So now, when I am in a standstill traffic jam, I do that thing with the key until things get moving. When I get to the drive-up window at the bank, I do it. I especially do it when I am hopping into the post office to get my mail.

Never much for confrontation or proselytizing, I have nevertheless worked on a little greeting for those folks who have not discovered the leftward twist of the key. "Is that your car? It's cold out. I guess you left the motor running because you want to keep it nice and warm for when you get back in. I just wondered if you have thought about the gas it's burning and the carbon that is polluting the atmosphere."

So far I have not been punched in the nose for this, but it could happen. I expect green bruising.

— Bonner McAllester



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summer, fall, and woman passed without scent
not a whisper from the wind through the pines
graffiti gone blind to the landscape walls
as if the Muse fell senseless and senile
but en route to the oratorio
I must have stumbled or slipped and fallen
into the Temple of the Word and so,
not knowing the proper prayers and callings,
I had to scratch and claw and crawl my way
to the altar, to the old Stage of Dreams
to prostrate and prove myself as oak smoke,
nettle sting, cicoria, and love stream

— Boney Oscar

Landscape

Sky lightens over somber hills that stretch
across my view through silhouetted trees.
Framed within my window, pale clouds inch
into the picture as the sun's rays tease
the tops of trees, adding texture, shading
to a livening scene. Becoming strong,
blues that night concealed are out of hiding.
What once was black is now with color strung.
Each vantage point affords a tapestry:
nature's brushwork, free for all to see.

— Ed Schur

Sapping Time

When the nights are cold and nippy
And the sun shines warm all day,
Just before the red-winged blackbird
Heralds the springtime on its way,
Then we take our bits and bit stocks
To the maples tall and stout
Where we bore, then hang the buckets
And the sap drips from the spout.

Those good old towering maples
That have for generations stood,
Filling bucket after bucket,
Yield a treat that's mighty good!
When the maple sap is boiling
Its aroma rises sweet.
There's a joy in sapping season
You will find that's hard to beat!

— Eleanor Kimberley

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Jumping on the Bandwagon

I was aware that it happened to some. I never would have guessed that it would happen to me. I still find myself in shock that I, a stickler for informed political decisions, went all out for Hillary Clinton on a whim.

For as long as I can remember politics, I have been a certifiable enthusiast. From the day our radio introduced politics to me at age four, my interest and expertise has grown steadily. I still have fond memories of discussing presidential politics at Kindergarten recess. Through these years of obsession I have experienced the thrill of a tight race and the burden of eight years too many. Yet never had I seen a presidential candidate in "real life."

On January 24th, the phone call came. The prerecorded message urged us to rally for Hillary Clinton the following day at Springfield College. I must say, I was skeptical and generally unenthusiastic. However, the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. My favorite candidates had already dropped out, and the others I liked would probably exit in the ensuing days (they did). The Democratic race at that point was essentially Clinton vs. Obama.

Although I cannot vote, I always put a great deal of effort in deciding whom to put my support behind. My mother at last convinced me to go, reminding me that it would be an educational experience and my chance to see "a piece of history."

By the next morning, I was "all fired up and ready to go", to quote a favorite chant of Obama supporters. My sister, my mother, and I piled into the family car, and, with MapQuest directions in hand, we were on our way.

On the way, I explained the views of the candidates, the election process, and the troubled economy to my younger sister. The latter was to be the topic of Clinton's speech. After a spirited and lengthy discussion, we arrived in the vicinity of Springfield, a large busy area with a distressing lack of road signs. Suffice to say, we quickly became lost.

After many navigational difficulties and time running short to the presentation, we finally arrived at Springfield College. It was time for nightmare #2: parking. Following ten minutes of searching the nearby streets and lots, we were finally able to acquire a small space about half a mile away from the lengthy, steadily expanding line leading to the colossal gymnasium where the senator was to speak. As the towering structure slowly came into view we felt decidedly reassured of our admittance, noting the building's height, breadth, and circumference.

While encased within the bustling line, we met other fellow Berkshirites, energetic, friendly Clinton supporters from Lee. As the wait wound on, we discussed dropouts, Clinton, and the virtues of the remaining candidates. Some around us took full advantage of the expansive crowds as an opportunity to spread their views to a sizable audience. Demonstrators, Ron Paul supporters, and those distributing junk leaflets swarmed the sidewalk. Pamphlet titles ranged from the mild *Progressive Report* to the intense *Is the Devil in Your Laptop?*

Following twenty more minutes of waiting, the line suddenly began to disperse. Police officers roved among the crowd, informing each and every member that the gargantuan gymnasium was in fact full. Only the loyal and intrigued (including us) hung around the building, awaiting further news.

That news was agonizingly slow to come. As we tried to stay warm after twenty more minutes, the administrators finally decided to put up a speaker outside to let the chilly teeming masses hear the speech. A man flipped the on switch. Instead of the senator's voice, what poured out was an apology: "Senator Clinton is running a minute late," followed by blaring pop music.

As supporters distributed the Clinton signs among us, for the first time a sense of unity and excitement enveloped me.

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Standing beside me in support of Senator Clinton were people of both genders, all ages, all races and colors, some speaking different languages. While some were dressed in expensive suits, most, like me were dressed in the common garb.

It was then that a nearby police officer received a message on his radio. Within moments the police forced us back behind a police line. A convoy, headed by a black van and including a gigantic bus, pulled up. First, the media poured in great swaths out of the bus. Then, a woman stepped out of the van, walked up the steps and turned to face us. It was (a seriously late) Hillary Clinton. She turned, smiled, waved, and gave the crowd a big thumbs up. Caught in the fervor of the moment, we responded with a resounding roar, a great tumultuous cheer that reverberated through the sun-drenched yet chilly air. Then, as we exuberantly waved our signs, she turned and walked through the front door, ready to deliver her speech.

Despite the long waits, persistent troubles, and cold weather I felt an odd sense of deep satisfaction just before the speech. However, it was the words themselves and the power and emotion of their delivery the convinced me once and for all to back Hillary.

I had listened to Obama speeches before on the radio. I found them acceptable, yet slightly devoid of a central plan. While I agree with his ideals, especially in this present day and age, concrete, practical speaking is what appeals to me most.

Contrary to my expectations, Clinton's speech on the economy was not complex, confusing, fluffy, calculating, or disjointed. The body of it was sprinkled with humor, cemented with powerful rhetoric, personal, and customized. It possessed a decidedly populist appeal.

The speech started out with some clever jabs at the current White House, then progressed into matters of education, health, job creation, clean energy, and more. With each new topic she provided a well-thought out, ten-point plan on the subject, mixing in trace amounts of pandering. There was no talk of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, a so-called stimulus package, or any confusing, obscure, or poorly defined notion or fix. I found that my lecture earlier had been pointless. My eight-year-old sister could have comprehended every word without a bit of explanation.

So moved was I by the beauty, grandeur, and simplicity present in that brilliant oration that I returned home with my head spinning with pro-Clinton thoughts. When my head finally calmed and rationalized my complete experience, my conclusion was surprisingly the same. It had been a memorable, worthwhile, genuine experience.

— Jonah Carlson

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Otis Cultural Council Grant Awards

Otis Cultural Council Chair Arlene Tolopko has announced the award of 27 grants totaling $4,000 for cultural programs in Otis. The grants were awarded from a pool of funds distributed by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Grant recipients include Berkshire Music School (Valentine Cabaret); Berkshire Theater Festival School Residency Program (Farmington Region Elementary School-FRES); Cliff Brodeur, Square Dance; and five PASS grants that provide subsidies for school children to attend cultural field trips (FRES programs): Debra Dutton (two theater trips), preschoolers trip to "Seussical," Chris Keller (NYS Museum), & preschoolers Robert Rogers' puppet show.

Other recipients are Castle Hill's "Selfish Giant" (with Sandisfield Cultural Council); Shakespeare's Fall Festival; White Church Preservation Committee; Bob Thomas, "Grandma, Vaudeville & Me"; Henry Lappen, Juggler; Laura Lin, Tai Workshop; Jay Mankita, Veggie Van; Otis Quilters; John Porcino, Story & Song; Ellen Clegg, "Drum Away the Blues"; and four local artists: Ken Packie, Chainsaw Carving demonstration; Paula Kohler, Jewelry Design workshop; Cheryl Mirer, Collage workshop; & Adrienne Lederman, Bicentennial Quilt Program at FRES for 5th graders.

Otis Cultural Council members are Michaelina Cavallaro, Maryanne Cicchillo, Joan Delevie, Angelina Dubourg, Debbie Fogel, Adrienne Lederman, Carol Lombardo, Cheryl Mirer, Leslie Morris, Diane Provenz, Arlene Tolopko, Hank Wingate, and Charlotte Zloczower.

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Tracking the Fantail Deer

I have undertaken some major travels in recent weeks, but they have involved time, not distance. That is, I have been going through old papers and books, documents and stories, sorting and filing and marveling.

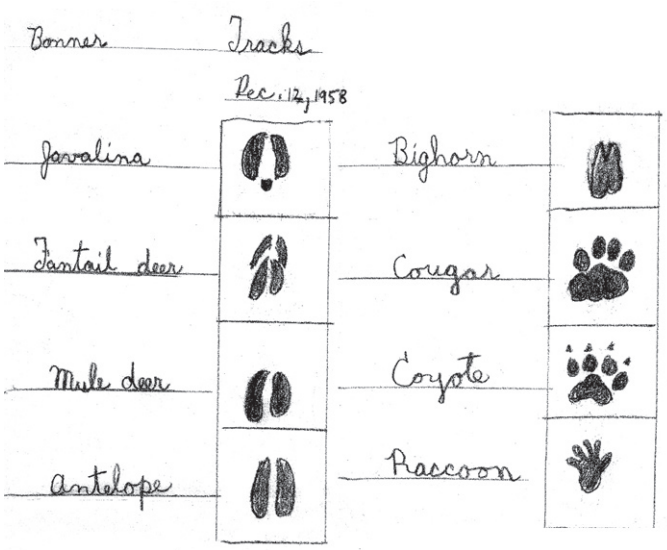
I came across the notes of a young scientist, me, from 1958. Looks like I was interested in tracks and had been making some drawings. At age nine I don't know if I'd *seen* a javelina, but there is a track on a piece of paper with my name on it, and the date. There are also the tracks, in pencil, of several other ungulates and three carnivores. The taxonomist in me, now, wonders what that younger one had in mind, choosing these eight for study.

My family was recently back east from what to me has seemed ever since like my dreams come true: a year in Arizona while Dad worked on a film on the Navajo reservation. I explored the desert around Sedona, where we lived, and the next winter back in New England ("Dec. 12, 1958") it looks like I was missing my western critters.

This piece of paper, connecting me to my nine-year old self, turned up in a book on tracks. I see by its sticker and Mom's careful inscription that we got it at the museum shop at the American Museum of Natural History, New York.

Some of the tracks I put down in pencil are not given in this book, though, and I wonder if I got them at the museum itself. There is one, in particular, that I looked at just lately and wondered if I'd made it up. Turns out I should have had more faith in my young scientific self.

There's a pretty good drawing of a deer track, and in my early cursive writing: "Fantail Deer." I am thinking, "Huh? Did I mean to label it Whitetail Deer?" I was



thinking I'd never heard of any such thing as a fantail, unless it was a bird. I think of a deer bounding off into the woods with a sort of turkey or peacock tail tacked on. It does not compute.

So I hit the books, and here is what I find, with apologies to that accurate kid. Yes, there is a fantail deer. It occurs in Arizona and is smaller than the whitetail we know around here. In fact, it's one of 38 subspecies of whitetail deer and was "first described" (this means by a white guy) by Lt. Elliott Coues, a naturalist and Army surgeon of the 1860's who was stationed in Ft. Whipple, Arizona, now Prescott.

That deer track, in graphite and nearly fifty years old, led me to an acquaintance with Coues, prolific writer and early explorer who was stationed at various places with the Army and studied and wrote wherever he was. I was just starting to admire the guy when I found some letters his wife Jeannie wrote to her sister during the time after the Civil War when she and Elliott lived at Ft. Macon, which was a federal prison at the time, managed by the Army.

Jeannie was a real bright light and a lively writer. "You ask if I am engaged in vanities. I am rebosoming old shirts." It wasn't too long, though, before she and Elliott got divorced and he was posted back to Ft. Whipple. He was not pleased and wrote angrily that he blamed his worst enemy for this, namely Jeannie. His biographers rat on him: he was a womanizer and had many affairs during his marriage. But did she really get him sent back out to Arizona out of spite? And how did she manage this?

Jeannie stayed in Baltimore and kept writing those wonderful letters. Toward the end of her life (she outlived him by 20 years) she wrote, "Love your griefs; they are

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your best friends. Looking back over these many years I see that the good and admirable things of life have indeed belonged to adversity rather than to prosperity."

Elliott Coues died in Baltimore at age 58, same age I am right now. Though he was principally an ornithologist (and a bad husband), he got a little western deer named after him: *Odocoileus virginianus couesi,* the fantail or Coues deer. Game biologists in Arizona say it is pronounced like "house," but the hunters out there say "cooze." Some other local folks say "coo-wees" or "cow-wees."

The little deer lives on steep rocky slopes and weighs less than one hundred pounds. They are mountain deer, agile like goats, and the tail is big for them, proportionately. It's not really a fan, like a turkey tail, but it is grey on top and white below, so if the deer holds it up it flashes a big white signal or fan, making it easy to follow for the other herd members or fawns. If those Arizona hunters are after it, or disgruntled Army surgeons who wish they were back at their desk writing up newly noticed (by them) species of birds, it holds that tail clamped down and blends into the rocks of Cochise County, Arizona.

The other tracks illustrated on my list: mule deer, antelope, bighorn, cougar, coyote, and caccoon. Wonder if Jeannie could get *me* sent out there again. I'd be glad.

— Bonner J. McAllester

Book Review

The Majesty of Your Loving: A Couple's Journey through Alzheimer's, by Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle

Besides being more and more urgently needed, this beautiful yet practical book fills the lacking spiritual dimension to a caregiver's problems handling the ever-increasing challenge of Alzheimer's disease and other terminal situations. Olivia and Harrison Hoblitzelle were both in mid-life, active in teaching, and both also faithful students and meditation practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism. "Hob" held a Ph.D. in English Literature and was a distinguished professor but, ironically, served in hospices as well. Olivia has been a teacher in the field of behavioral medicine and is a gifted writer and therapist. They had two grown children, several grandchildren, and were world travelers at the onset of the disease.

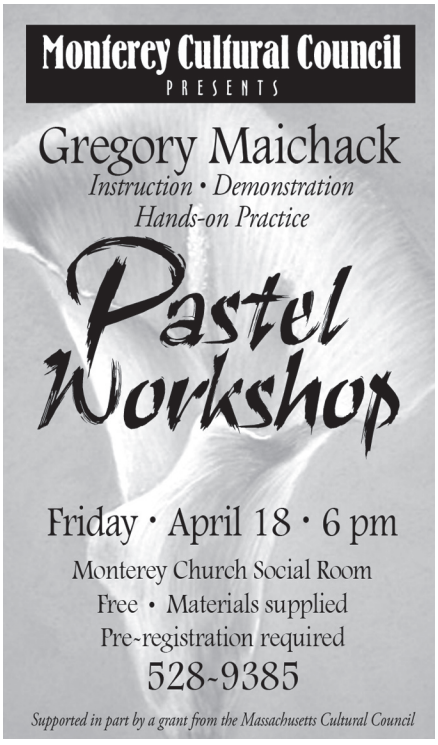
Slowly and inexorably Olivia is forced to watch her husband's mind deteriorate. She decides to record not only his mental conditions but also her own reactions of compassion, resentment, guilt, despair, and unfailing love. In turning to her family and friends for support, she finds comfort, but the most telling source in the end comes from her years of spiritual training and the perspective and insights this yields.

Hob, in the meantime, in his rare lucid moments never fails to attempt to describe almost objectively what it feels like to be transitioning from normal consciousness to another level of reality. It is almost as if he is taking psychiatric notes on the nature of Alzheimer's! The result is a deeply moving record of two heroic souls attempting to make a healing gift of love and compassion to all those many others who will come after them. This is Tibetan Buddhism put into practice: to offer up one's suffering for the benefit of others.

Each chapter is followed by practical solutions and seed thoughts. A series of appendices include Clear Light Meditation, Caring for Loved Ones in Death, and Topics for Discussion. There is also a helpful bibliography and website source list.

If you know anyone caring for someone facing certain death this book could be the best gift ever. It truly glows with inner light and practical wisdom and surely will become a contemporary classic.

— Alice O. Howell



A Partridge Song of Seasons

The spring drumming of a male partridge on the podium of a hollow log is more territorial than ritualistic, warning his competition that his mate will soon be nesting nearby and is not to be disturbed! As a non-migratory ground nesting pair, they both survive in the same local corner of the forest twelve months of the year.

For the partridge, the number twelve is more a musical hallmark of the holiday classic "The Twelve Days Of Christmas." The first verse celebrates the birthday of Christ on December 25 with a gift of a partridge perched in a pear tree. The partridge represents the figure of Christ because the hen will feign injury to decoy predators from her helpless nesting. In his own words, "Oh Jerusalem, how often I would have sheltered you under my wings, as a hen does her chicks."

If the mother partridge gains a saintly image from a sixteenth-century verse children recited to remember the number of religious days before Epiphany on January 6, in her everyday survival she is tuned into the music of the spheres! For instance, she has the uncanny instinct for laying some ten to twelve eggs over the period of a month, knowing when to start incubating them so that they all hatch out at about the same time.

In my *Monterey News* article of June 2000, entitled "The Planetary Partridge," I reported that the population peaks every ten years or so seem to coincide with sun spots, or solar bursts which in similar cycles produce warm nesting seasons when the clutch is not subject to dying from cold and dampness. Timing is everything!

Other celestial connections are similar to the wooly caterpillar rings predicting the severity of a winter to come. The growth of chitinous rods on a partridge's feet act as snowshoes and their measurement indicates the meteorological conditions ahead. The patterns of their plumage also imitate the earth around them, such as tail feathers resembling mushrooms. Further south, partridges take on a rusty shade from the tint of clay in the soil.

How often do partridges appear in a pear tree? When snow covers their ground food in late December, they are often seen climbing up in the bare branches of fruit trees just before dusk to eat mast, or buds already formed for the next spring's blossoms. It is the season of the shortest days and longest nights, when the Christmas carols are sung. It was also the time when, long ago, a bright and shining star began to appear over Bethlehem.

— George Emmons

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Letter from College
English or American Politics?

In England, American politics is a topic of conversation in most places. Sometimes you overhear snippets in coffee shops, other times it dominates students' conversations, and occasionally it is background fodder for class discussions. Regardless, as an American in a foreign land—although it is England—the topic of who will win what is a subject of great debate. I find my limited knowledge of the American government system (in the area of how primaries actually work and who from which party gets to vote when) enough to explain some nuances to my new friends. The big questions that seem to arise are: Will a new president be able to get the country out of Iraq? Who do you think will win the primaries? What about the general election? When do you vote? Yikes. I don't have answers to most of those questions really; I have guesses, hunches, and of course many hopes that some would say are overly optimistic. I did vote via absentee ballot in the Massachusetts primary, and my ballot did make it across an ocean in time to be counted.

When glancing at the television screens around the London School of Economics, oftentimes the coverage is of one of the candidates. Last week in the *Guardian*, out of the top five stories most read, three were about the US elections. The LSE College Democrats (no, there is no Republican organization on campus) set up a USA week around Super Tuesday. American politics are alive and well, and thanks to constant dialogue they are never far from my mind, and neither are the questions that accompany such conversations. Recently my boss from last summer, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, endorsed Barack Obama. I found myself relieved, and somewhat vindicated in my hopes that this charismatic speaker is not, as many people rightfully speculate, too naïve for politics. I am a registered Democrat, and while I have the utmost respect for John McCain, as I think many do, regardless of their political affiliation, I would like to see the White House change hands. That being said, some people argue there is not a world of difference between parties anyway, so maybe it is more about the actual candidates themselves. I'm not entirely sure if you can find a huge number of differences between the two Democratic candidates; each has flaws and strengths, and I am concerned about either one's chances when facing John McCain.

I hope Senator Kennedy's confidence in Mr. Obama's experience is reassuring to hesitant Democratic voters. I think our generation, meaning the youngest voting age bracket, which is often cited as the least participatory in the election process, is ready to take a little bit of a leap now. It is time for a change. People over here, at least many I've talked, to are decidedly pro-Obama, and it is for this exact reason. They liked Bill Clinton just fine, but there is something about Barack Obama that is significantly appealing to them. Perhaps he is inexperienced, and it is not to say there will not be mistakes along the way—after all just look at the last seven years. A smooth presidency seems rather impossible to hope for in the world today.

I admit impressions are important. I saw Senator Obama a few times this summer walking through the halls, and as I witness his charisma in action at speeches and rallies these days, I am constantly reminded of one time in particular. He was walking out to his car from the senators' only entrance to the Russell Office Building, and his long strides and confident posture looked every bit that of a president. There's a marble platform across the street in the park for announcements, and some young kid was leaning against its rail, just hanging out on a summer day. He called out, "Hey Obama!" and I glanced back to watch the senator slow down slightly. A smile lit up his face, and he called back something along the lines of "Hey man, what's up?" The kid just beamed back at him, and Obama got in his car.

There is something to be said for taking a safe road with someone familiar who has been in the White House, but in this election year the discussions I have here in England remind me the rest of the world may want a true and drastic change. The Clinton presidency was a good one, but do we need a dynasty to ensure a return to that? I don't think that is necessarily so, and while I would not object to seeing a woman in the White House, if you are going to look at symbolic choices there is no need to harp on how either candidate represents a shift. The British people care about American politics—often it seems they might care more than the average American. It is a significant reminder of how the consequences of our decisions as American citizens do stretch far beyond our borders.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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For the Birds

By late winter, birds are usually swarming all over my bird feeders, but this year only a few chickadees, a nuthatch, a titmouse or two, and those little clowns the woodpeckers have come to dine. Where are the juncos, the redpolls, the pine siskins, the mourning doves, and the finches? I want to speculate about more houses in the neighborhood, weather patterns, global warming, maybe all of the above. Whatever the reasons, there is no getting around the fact that American songbird populations are under stress. The handful of birds feeding in my garden have me thinking about how to help them in a more lasting way throughout the year.

For most of us in Monterey, summertime bird feeding is out. I'm perfectly happy to find a way to coexist with the bears by eliminating any food or garbage that would tempt them to hang around my house and barn. Two years ago this spring, I turned the porch light on in the middle of the night to find a big fat character trying to climb in through a window! Fortunately he was indeed too rotund to make it, but he left broken glass everywhere and he never did get the sunflower seeds stored on the porch. Such contact with people puts the bears at risk as well. Bears that lose their fear of humans through repeated exposure can end up getting killed for the safety of people. What about the safety of bears? The feeders come down in early March now, and I haven't had any more late-night visitors.

Back to the birds. I would prefer to create a landscape that provides adequate food, water, and shelter year after year, and reserve the feeders for the coldest months. Keeping the birds in mind when designing a garden becomes more of a necessity all the time. According to Stephen Kress of the Audubon Society, "With nearly 80 percent of the wildlife habitat in the United States occurring on private lands and an average of 2.1 million acres converted to residential use every year, it is clear that what happens on private land will determine the fate of most North American birds."

Birds need a multilayered habitat if they are to feed and raise their young safely. Most of Monterey falls into the "woodland edge" landscape category, so a combination of tall trees, understory shrubs and smaller trees, flowering plants, and ground covers provides the ideal vegetation for most of our local birds. With a little planning, this scheme is easy to achieve. Many homeowners could concentrate first on the understory layer of small trees and shrubs, since years of deer browsing in their neighborhood have thinned out this intermediate growth or removed it altogether. Planting even a few shrubs around the base of some taller trees would provide the birds with needed shelter and food. The biggest question is what to plant.

Until very recently, the bird-gardening books often recommended shrubs that we now know are invasive in our region. Of course, there was a good reason for such recommendations at the time. One of the main characteristics of invasive shrubs, prolific fruit and seed production, is what makes them so attractive to birds. The birds eat the fruit and seeds and deposit them all over the place in their droppings. The resulting shrubs thrive because they have no natural local elements to check their growth. In the process, they crowd out native vegetation and destroy the balance of plants, and the animals depending on them, that makes up our ecosystem.

Fortunately, we have many native shrubs to plant instead. The natives can bring great beauty to the landscape, as well as benefit the birds. Natives have the uncanny ability to produce seeds and fruit just when birds are migrating past and need food most urgently. Some native shrubs have gorgeous red berries, while others produce fantastic red foliage in the fall to attract birds to their less conspicuous fruit. Birds know by instinct when particular native berries will ripen, and we get to enjoy the colorful spectacle. Everyone wins when we plant native species.

Here are a few examples of invasive shrubs and native alternatives:

Japanese and European barberry were planted for their reddish foliage and bright red fall fruit. These thorny shrubs made a good hedge, but they have now taken over some forested areas in Monterey and elsewhere. A trip up to the town of Mt. Washington in spring will demonstrate how successfully they can spread. Good substitutes include winter-

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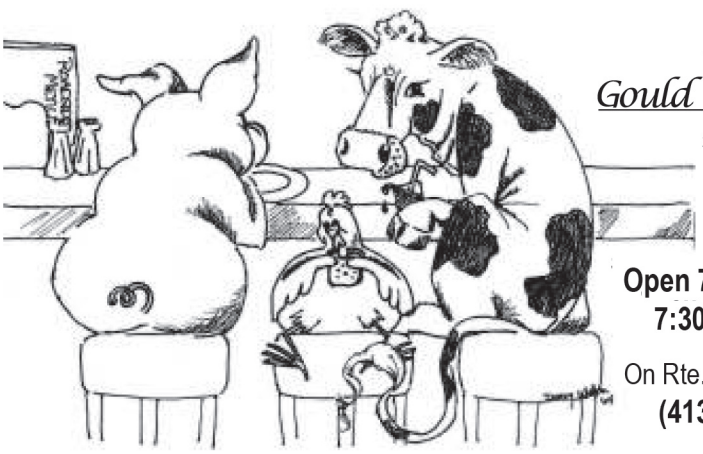

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berry, doublefile viburnum, elderberry, and chokeberry. They all have lovely fall foliage and fruit.

Burning bush, also known as winged Euonymus. If you want to see what kind of damage burning bush can do, just drive down New Marlboro Road in early fall. The shrub has taken over on both sides of the road. For equally fine fall foliage colors and plentiful fruit, plant the shrubby dogwoods, highbush blueberry, witherod viburnum, or hobbleberry instead.

Privet. We don't see too much privet hedge in Monterey, but don't let it get established, because it can easily escape from cultivation. Plant mountain laurel, hollies (if you don't have deer problems), or eastern hemlock trained into hedge form for evergreen alternatives. Some hedges, like bayberry and Prague viburnum, keep their leaves until late winter.

Multiflora rose. You can spot this rose at woodland edges and in old fields around mid-June, when the flowers appear in large, fragrant clusters. You may see dozens of the shrubs in one area. Drive over to the Alford valley for a good example. Plant Carolina rose, Virginia rose, or prickly wild rose instead. If you do, the birds will have plenty of fruit and thorny branches to hide in.

Bush honeysuckles, especially the Amur, Morrow's, and Tatarian varieties, take over large wooded areas because of their tolerance for shade. Japanese honeysuckle is a fast-growing vine and should also be avoided. For a better vine honeysuckle, try the native trumpet variety and watch the hummingbirds adopt your yard. For alternatives to bush honeysuckles you can plant bottlebrush buckeye, serviceberry, or American cranberry bush.

For backyard habitats to supply all the birds' needs, many other elements come into play. Fresh water, annual and perennial flowers that provide seeds and draw insects eaten by birds, and dead trees left standing for nesting places are a few. And we can of course tailor our planting plans to attract different bird species depending on our interests. Native shrubs give us a great starting place to make our gardens more hospitable for the birds. The birds will thank you for it.

For additional information:

Robert A. Askins. *Restoring North America's Birds: Lessons from Landscape Ecology*. 2002, Yale University Press.

William Cullina. *Native Trees, Shrubs and Vines*. 2002, Houghton Mifflin.

Betsy S. Franz. *The Wildlife Habitat Journal: Restoring and Exploring Wildlife Habitat in Your Own Backyard*. 2006, Lulu.com.

Stephen W. Kress. *The Audubon Society Guide to Attracting Birds: Creating Natural Habitats for Properties Large and Small, 2nd ed*. 2006, Cornell University Press.

Margaret McAvoy and Pat Kite. *The Bird Lover's Garden*. 2001, Friedman/Fairfax Publishers.

National Wildlife Federation. "Create a Certified Wildlife Habitat." www.nwf.org/backyard.

— Ruth Green

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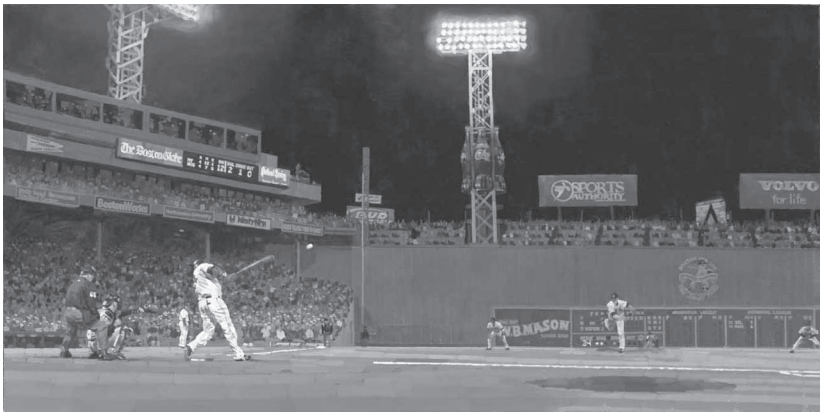

DAVID ORTIZ, 2004

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Walkin' & Blowin' in the Wind

To the Editor:

This year I am staying home from the Washington, DC, Peace March. Every year at the time of the anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the national anti-war movements work like crazy to stage a rally and protest in Washington, and thousands of people like me who are sick about the war ride the highways through the night to meet up on the mall, between Lincoln and Washington, to say with collective voice: this is not the America we love. We believe we can do better in the world.

If Washington and Lincoln were just a couple of miles down the road, I'd go. What is just down the road is my town center, so I'm going to go there and I plan to walk. I've made that little walk more and more, recently, and I am always struck by my incredible good fortune to live in this place of clean air, wonderful trees, inspiring vistas. My neighbors wave as they drive by.

On Saturday, March 15, at 9:00 a.m. I'll set out from my house. I'll be grateful the whole way to town, and I will be shaking my head at how the dice rolled to put me here and how my good fortune may be connected to the terrible misfortune of others: Americans, Iraqis, Afghans. It's been five years of misery for those thousands—no pretty walk to town for them. I can't see this from my house, but I feel it more and more wherever I am. Who is paying for those bombs and guns? I am. Whose lifestyle depends upon burning imported fossil fuels from those far-off tortured lands? Mine does. What good does it do for me to make these connections? I only have one life and I'd rather not spend it "turning my head, pretending I just don't see …" ("Blowin' In The Wind").

— Bonner McAllester

Remembering Anne Lucidi Rausch

Anne Rausch, mother of Robert Rausch of Hupi Woods Circle and Carol Anne Rausch of Cumberland, Rhode Island, passed away Monday, February 4, in Pawtucket. She was the wife of the late Bertholdt Rausch. Born October 13, 1913, of parents who emigrated from the Old World in a quest for a better life, she was one of two daughters and five children.

She worked hard, leaving school to help support her family. She had the quality of continuously enduring hardships of the kind that we do not face today – such as washing clothes by hand and hanging them up to dry in all seasons. She also helped preserve the vegetables Robert's father grew in their backyard garden for years.

Robert and Carol's mother helped others outside her immediate family, such as Mrs. Magill, the mother of friends of the family – taking care of this bighearted woman for years and never for any material reward.

Anne Rausch married Bertholdt in 1941, moving from Providence to the then wilderness of Cumberland, where she began raising Carol and Robert. She was an exemplary homemaker, learning to bake bread, pies, and pastries, and she became a wonderful cook. Unlike Robert, she worried and came to have grey hair.

Anne Rausch loved people and they loved her back. She felt sad about the violence and loss of life in our world. She struck up conversations easily with people in supermarkets or on buses. Right to the end she kept these qualities, and the health providers who cared for her really cared as she cared for them in her own way.

She was genuine and down to earth, loved watching people, watching sunsets, and she loved …

Remembering Jane Sargent Kessler

Jane Sargent Kessler, 84, a resident of the Odd Fellows Home in Auburn, Maine, and formerly of Monterey, died on Tuesday, January 15, at the Hospice House of Androscoggin Home Care and Hospice after a brief illness.

Born in Evanston, Illinois on June 7, 1923, she was the daughter of Ralph Sargent and Elise Hodges Sargent Connor. She graduated from Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, received her Masters degree from NYU and in 1958 her Doctorate in Education from Harvard University.

Jane was a passionate and gifted science teacher. She taught at the Emma Willard School in Troy, NY, at the Brearley School in New York City and finally at St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School in New York City until she retired from teaching in 1978. After her husband's retirement in 1981 the couple moved to Monterey, where she continued to share her gift for teaching.

She volunteered at the Massachusetts Audubon Society, guiding school children on field trips to the Audubon's Wildlife Sanctuary and assisting in the development of a wetlands education curriculum for use in the classroom. She also became a volunteer at St. Mary's school in Lee and was active teaching home-schooled children from the Union Church in Tyringham.

Jane married Hans Kessler in Tangier, Morocco, in October 1954. She and Hans lived in Dakar, Senegal, for three years and returned to the United States in 1957. The couple made their home in New York City, where they raised their two children, Elise and Dorothea. They spent summers in their home in Monterey and after Hans' retirement made it their permanent home. For a time Jane ran a needlepoint store and gave lessons, out of her home. She was an active member of the Embroiders Guild.

Together they shared a loved of walks in the woods, botany, music, history, art, and travel. They were active members of the Union Church in Tyringham, where they ran a Vacation Bible School program. Later they were members of Christ Church in Canaan, Connecticut.

After her husband's death in 1997, Jane moved to Buckfield, Maine, to be near her daughter Elise. She was a member of the Buckfield Community Church. Jane also volunteered at the Odd Fellows Home of Maine for several years, and moved into their residence in 2005, finding a new home.

Jane is survived by daughter Dorothea Dickey and her husband, Zachary, and their children James and Elise of Lake Dallas, Texas; daughter Elise Wiley and her husband, John, of Buckfield, Maine; by her very special extended family, nephew Karl Kessler, his wife, Ann, and their daughter, Johanna of Ridgefield, Connecticut, and niece Dottie Kessler of Bristol, Connecticut.

A memorial service was held on Saturday, February 2, at the Buckfield Community Church in Maine. A graveside service is for the spring in Monterey. Finnerty and Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington is handling the arrangements.

In lieu of flowers, those who wish to make donations in her memory may do so to the Odd Fellows and Rebekahs Home of Maine or Hospice House Fund, Androscoggin Home Care and Hospice through Finnerty and Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Gt. Barrington, MA 01230.

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. holidays): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Every Friday or Saturday in March: Music nights at Monterey General Store, 7–9 p.m., no cover See ad this page.

Saturday, March 8:

Rabies Clinic for dogs and cats, 1:00–2:30 p.m., Monterey Firehouse. $10 per shot. Dog licenses available.

Monterey Democratic Caucus to select candidates for town offices, 11 a.m., Meetinghouse basement. Snow date Friday, March 14, 7 p.m. See p. 11.

Thursday, March 13: Free Blood Pressure Clinic, 2:00 p.m., Monterey Town Hall Meeting Room.

Friday, March 14:

Sign-making in preparation for Monterey Winter Soldier Event, 5:00 p.m., Meetinghouse basement. Bring your supper in a bag, stay for films beginning at 7:00. For information call 528-9385 (Bonner McAllester). See p. 5.

Saturday, March 15:

9 a.m.: Start walking to town for peaceful, prayerful vigil on the Meetinghouse steps, 10 a.m. to noon. Feeder marches from the four directions will prevent parking problems and save gas (528-9385 for information and walking/parking ideas). See p. 5.

Drop Box for *Monterey News* Submissions

Thanks to Kenn Basler at the Monterey General Store, the *News* now has a convenient drop box in the center of town where submissions may be left without going through the post office or trekking out to the editor's home. The box is on the door on the loading dock at the store. We invite and encourage submissions from readers—articles, drawings, photographs, announcements, poems, signed letters, or surprise us with something new. Just leave them in the drop box and the editor will pick them up.

Free healthy lawn and garden workshop, 10 a.m., Ward's Nursery, Great Barrington. To register, call Ward's at 413-528-0166. Sponsored by CET. See p. 12.

Basketmaking Workshop taught by Wendy Jensen, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. No experience necessary, preregistration required. See p. 9.

Tuesday, March 18: Free Health Screening, Community Health Program, 10 a.m., Town Hall Meeting Room.

Wednesday, March 19: Don't forget to pick up Cancer Drive daffodils at Monterey General Store.

The Observer
January 26–February 25

High temp. (2/19)	55°
Low temp. (2/11)	2°
Avg. high temp.	32.8°
Avg. low temp.	15°
Avg. temp.	23.9°
Snowfall	24.2 in.
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	9.53 in.

Precipitation occurred on 23 days.

Saturday, March 22: Square and contra dancing, 8:30–11:30 p.m., Dewey Hall, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Paul Rosenberg. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Friday, March 21: Full Moon.

Sunday, March 23: Easter Egg Hunt on Library lawn, 2 p.m. Sponsored by Monterey Coffee Club.

Saturday, March 31: Deadline for submitting Citizen Petitions and Special Articles for the May Town Meeting Warrant, 11:30 a.m.

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Contributions from local artists this month:
Rachel Arnow, p. 23; Maureen Banner, pp. 17, 21, 22;
George Emmons, p. 18; Bonner McAllester, p. 16.

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